

THE WESTERN SOCIALIST

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

Vol. 5. No. 44.

WINNIPEG, JANUARY, 1938.

Price 5¢.

THE NEW YEAR

The glittering tinsel, the many colored decorations of every description, the brilliant lights and the cheerful greetings that have enhanced or obscured the scenic wonders of our immediate environment during recent weeks have now all been removed. Santa Claus, who has mystified the more thoughtful of the children by his emaciated, down-at-the-heel appearance and by his presence in so many places at the same time, has doffed his Santa Claus clothes and whiskers, is back in his own rags and is now looking for another job. The vendors of jiggers and gadgets of innumerable varieties have unloaded their wares and are now counting the takings. The greeting cards and other presents have been bought and distributed and are in large part now reposing in garbage cans. The charitable institutions have done their good deed for the year, and the workers, if they were on their pins, have had the annual square meal to which they are traditionally entitled. In a word, the Christmas season is ended.

We enter now upon another year, to be jolted, perhaps a trifle rudely, out of the world of make-believe back into the world of reality. It is customary at this time for everyone to wish everyone else a happy new year, and while this custom dates back beyond the memory of living man, it has to date been productive of little in the way of fruit for most workers. But it has been truly said that hope springs eternal in the human breast, and although it is recognized by most workers - or, at least, by those who permit them-

selves to think about it - that their past has not been marked by an abundance of the things that bring happiness, there remains always the hope that the future will be different.

The world scene gives little encouragement to this hope. The Liberal Party still holds the reins of government at Ottawa; Social Credit still confers its dubious blessings upon Alberta; John Queen has again captured the mayoralty chair for "Labor" in Winnipeg; the workers have dutifully written "ja" on their ballot papers in Russia; Japan still proceeds with its "civilizing" crusade in China; widespread poverty and insecurity still reap their harvest of slow death in the ranks of the working class throughout the world; and increased armament expenditures in practically all countries promise a more sudden death for greater numbers of them in the near future. These and other facts that could be mentioned give ample evidence of continued normalcy in the world of capital and continued misery in the world of labor during the new year.

It is true, of course, that over the past year or so there has been a definite revival in trade; and while it is contended in some quarters that this revival is mainly accounted for by the tremendous boom in the armaments industry and that the completion of armaments orders has brought the slump of more recent weeks, it is generally agreed among business men, economists, press writers and other approved persons that the slump is merely a temporary lull in the onward sweep of

industry back to prosperity.

Well, suppose we grant that our business men and their paid optimists are correct for once. Suppose we grant that the world is headed for a new period of prosperity. What about it? Does this mean that the workers are to live under conditions that will create comfort and happiness? It does not. It means that those who are now working will continue to work and that some of those who are now unemployed will obtain work, but that all who are working will continue to work for some other person or persons, to whom will go the results of that work beyond the amount that is required to enable the workers to continue working.

There may be some among our readers who will reply that it cannot always be simply a case of working to obtain the means of preserving the ability to work. There may be some who will strive to gain comfort from the thought that the future cannot be just a duplicate of the present and past. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the workers, although hoping for better times, actually place stumbling blocks in the way of their realization.

In present day society all the means for producing and distributing the requirements of society are owned by the capitalist class. Because of this class ownership, which is sanctioned by society (including the workers, who form the largest section of it), the mills, mines, factories, etc., can be operated only by permission and under conditions decided upon by their owners. The interest of the capitalists in allowing industry to be operated is not in ensuring for the members of society a sufficiency of the needs of life, but in obtaining profits, even to an unlimited extent, for themselves. These profits are created in the productive process and are realized in the sale of the goods produced. That is to say, the capitalists allow the workers to produce goods and, in effect, to retain for themselves a part of these goods, the balance, with the exception of a proportion which must be set aside to meet other expenses entailed by their production, being the profits. But these "profits" (indeed the whole product, for the capitalists in actual fact provide the workers with their "share" and, to some extent, meet their

other expenses out of the proceeds of previously produced goods) are in the form of quantities of some particular commodity, which, as such, are of no use to their owners and must therefore be sold before they are realized in a form desirable to the capitalists. When the capitalists are unable to sell their commodities, or when they experience difficulty in selling them, as has been the case during the past seven years, they cause production to be curtailed or stopped altogether, and the workers, in spite of their ever-pressing needs, are not permitted to consume the surpluses of wealth which they have produced (even though these surpluses should become destroyed by rot or rats before they are sold), and are not even permitted to operate the industries sufficiently to satisfy their barest wants. The means for providing the needs of society may be operated only for the continued enrichment of the capitalists, and when they cannot serve that end, then society must suffer.

We have said that this insane condition is sanctioned by the workers. They can end it whenever they will. Not by wishing each other a happy new year. Not by hoping for better times. But by deciding that they will no longer pay tribute to the capitalists for permission to exist; by deciding that they will no longer recognize the claims of the capitalist to the sole ownership of the means of subsistence; and by taking over these means and carrying on production for the one purpose of satisfying the needs of all the people.

With this task accomplished there will be no need for workers to wait until Christmas for a square meal; there will be no need for them to hope for better times; for they will have ensured for all time that square meals and better times are to be the normal feature of their daily life. Until this task is accomplished the lot of the workers will continue to be one of poverty, misery and insecurity. - J. Milne.

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GET A NEW READER NOW

THE "W.S." has had a struggle to live. The struggle can be made easier if every reader will get one more sub. during 1938.

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION NOTICE

THE WESTERN SOCIALIST is issued monthly by the SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA. All communications for the paper, including articles, subscriptions and money orders, should be addressed to the Editorial Committee, P.O. Box 1804, Winnipeg, Man.
Subscription Rate : 12 issues, 50'.

** T H E **
** W E S T E R N **
** S O C I A L I S T **

Vol. 4. JANUARY, 1938 No. 43

* BUSINESS HAS ITS UPS AND DOWNS *

The Dec. 8. issue of "Iron Age", a U.S. weekly dealing with conditions in the steel industry, points out that steel plants in the U.S. were operating at 80% of capacity in the first week of Sept. 1937, but had receded to 27% in the first week of December. Three years of slowly increasing industrial activity brought steel production from 20% in Sept., 1934, to the peak of 90% in May, 1937, but in 3 months it fell back to its position of 3 years ago. The "Time" magazine of Nov. 22. points out that the business decline in the U.S. is "the most rapid" in the history of the country.

As a result of this decline, which is general throughout American industry, the services of hundreds of thousands of workingmen and women are being dispensed with, and from England comes the news that "An increase of 166,000 in British unemployed in December - the fourth successive monthly increase - bringing the total unemployed to 1,600,000, comes as a severe shock to the British public." (Winnipeg Free Press, Jan. 6, 1938. In Canada also, in spite of the fact that Sir Charles Gordon, banker and one of the owners of the country, optimistically described business activity here as being "a happy contrast with the conditions of only two years ago", (Free Press, Dec 8th) there is reported a proportionate increase in the number of those without a job.

This strange development proceeds in the face of the gigantic rearmament expenditures being made by all countries on equipment for their armies, navies, and air forces. It is a problem which baffles the experts - the business executives, economists, "statesmen", politicians - and those sitting in the seats of the mighty. They try in vain to discover a stimulant to revive the faltering industrial mechanism, and fail because a solution is impossible within capitalist society. The trouble is that the present socialized method of producing things is in revolt against the capitalist class appropriation of those things.

Engels explains the process well in "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific."

"As a matter of fact, since 1825, when the first general crisis broke out, the whole industrial and commercial world, production and exchange among all civilized peoples and their more or less barbaric hangers-on, are thrown out of joint about once every ten years. Commerce is at a standstill, the markets are glutted, products accumulate, as multitudinous as they are unsaleable, hard cash disappears, credit vanishes, factories are closed, the mass of the workers are in want of the means of subsistence, because they have produced too much of the means of subsistence; bankruptcy follows upon bankruptcy, execution upon execution. The stagnation lasts for years; productive forces and products are wasted and destroyed wholesale, until the accumulated mass of commodities finally filter off, more or less depreciated in value, until production and exchange gradually begin to move again. Little by little the pace quickens. It becomes a trot. The industrial trot breaks into a canter, the canter in turn grows into the headlong gallop of a perfect steeplechase of industry, commercial credit, and speculation, which finally, after breakneck leaps, ends where it began - in the ditch of a crisis. And so over and over again. We have now, since the year 1825, gone through this five times, and at the present moment (1877) we are going through it for a sixth time."

Thus spoke Engels 60 years ago. We have experienced many more since then.

* OUR REPLY TO THE PROLETARIAN NEWS *

McDonald's Reply to O'Brien on Dialectics

One of our old time comrades, well and favorably known in Western Canada, a generation ago - C.M. O'Brien - takes exception to my article on "The Deluge of Dialectics" and, in the November issue of the Proletarian News, makes some caustic comments that are at least worthy of a brief examination.

The ability to paraphrase volumes, or even chapters of Marx and Dietzgen, while scrupulously adhering to the literal translation, is no mean accomplishment. It denotes patience, tenacity, and adaptability. Comrade O'Brien possesses all these, and probably more. But, in this world of social unrest, and scientific enquiry, we inhabit today, it seems to me that even more than all these excellent qualities is required of the Socialist student who seeks to function in the struggle of class against class.

There is now close to half a century since Marx and Engels have ceased from their labors. Scientists that they were they never contemplated throwing a barbed wire entanglement around their theories, and shutting out the possibility of future appraisal and extension. The changes that are continuously taking place in every branch of science can scarcely be expected to leave the arena of sociology and economics immune. Just as to which particular person, or group, makes the necessary gesture is not, in my opinion, a matter of great moment. If the work is done, and done correctly, we should welcome it from whatever source it emanates.

While O'Brien, in his quotation from Engels, acknowledges that no system of learning could embrace everything, and be final for all time, yet the whole trend of his article, from beginning to end portrays the very opposite. Just leave well enough alone, is the gist of it. Marx and Engels set the pace, while Dietzgen came mighty close to jumping the hurdles and, then, waving aside a string of lesser entries, he trots Lenin out of the paddock as the only one who ever came under the wire nose to nose with Engels. How delightfully simple and easy! He doesn't expect me to do anything about

it. Of course not, for all that is required has already been done. All we need now are a few faithful padres; instead of students, to tell the populace what the big boys said.

O'Brien seems to be extremely perturbed over the vague prospect of me writing a book on the subject, and so adding to the pressure of the "deluge". Well, so long as copious quotations from the masters, in any work on dialectics is "helpful" rather than "harmful", as O'Brien declares, then why does he get so upset over another book that would be certain to provide more quotations? What O'Brien really tries to convey is the idea that if anyone at all should ever interfere with the gospel of dialectics it should be only a real, dyed-in-the-wool Leninist - one who consistently eulogises the Communist International, and its Russian department, and who just as persistently denounces the American section of the same outfit. Dialectics, indeed! Even Adoratsky would throw up his hands in holy horror at this brand of quasi dialectics, provided he has not been "purged" out of existence before this.

Taking a quotation from my article, wherein I explained the present misuse of the dialectic in promoting factional warfare rather than supplying instruction in cosmic and social growth, O'Brien sagely remarks "is not factionalism a part of social development?" Suppose we grant this erudite conclusion, then, does it not logically follow that the desire to eliminate or reduce factionalism is likewise a part of the same process - so what? Were this kind of attitude to be admitted and countenanced in our studies there would be no conceivable sense in criticising anything. Even the capitalist class has its place in social development, but it does not make it any more palatable to a revolutionist on that account. In his eagerness to appear philosophic he merely succeeds in running the dialectic completely into the ground, and leaving it there.

Next, the question is posed - Did Lenin extend Marx? It is asked with an

air of assurance that the only possible reply must be in the affirmative. Then why not give us a little evidence to that effect? After a fairly careful scrutiny of the eight volumes of Lenin's collected works, that have been translated into English, I must admit my failure to find anything resembling an extension in either philosophy or economics. I have heard many of Lenin's ardent disciples reiterating fervid assertions, to the end that he did so, but they never seemed to be able to produce anything tangible to back it up. I am forced to conclude that if they have the goods they are deucedly secretive about letting them into general circulation. If O'Brien can do what neither Lenin nor his other apostles could succeed in doing, then, he is really taking us places, and showing us things.

We have all met the medicine men who claim that Lenin's contribution to extension was in the realm of tactics. To them, Marxism is not so much a matter of philosophy or economics, but a method of establishing United Fronts, People's Fronts, Progressive Fronts, and everything else under the sun but the one and only thing that really matters - a Socialist Front. On these super strategists I have neither the time nor the energy to waste. I would suggest, however, that extension is not synonymous with application. There would be plenty room for controversy over how far Lenin was able to apply Marxism to Russian conditions, but there is at least a basis for the contention that he could, and did. But extension, as I view it, implies that a missing element, overlooked or unknown to the pioneers, has been discovered and put in its place to complete the formula, or to round out the system.

Now, a final word on the cause of this argument. My little essay unquestionably broke new ground. It did more than the mere paraphrasers, the priest men, could ever do. It pointed out for the first time, I think, the deficiency existing in dialectical materialism as it stands today. It credited Engels with his invaluable contribution in Anti-Dühring, where he vividly and accurately describes the process through its media in both the natural and social worlds. But it also explained his omission of the

really vital factor of what causes these changes - the driving force by which they move from one form to another. A word picture, regardless of its clarity, does not provide this requisite, yet its inclusion is imperative before the mechanism can be expected to properly perform its function.

The article dealt with Hegel's part in the dialectical system, and of the opportunity missed by Feurbach, who inadvertently threw away an abstraction that could have been utilized to good effect in solving the problem. Had Marx and Engels managed to formulate the dialectic, in their own particular sphere of sociology and economics, instead of catching it on a pass from Hegel and Feurbach, the present chasm might well be bridged. But the indirectness of approach; the tortuous channels through which the theory developed; as well as the lack of urgency, at that time, to go beyond the marked improvements wrought by Marx and Engels militated against the work being done. Nor was the essay, in any sense of the word, a negative quantity. It showed the possibilities of overcoming whatever defects exist and, in this connection, I may mention that I know of more than one person who has given serious consideration to the subject, and who have contributed more than myself to its satisfactory completion.

All this was the meat of the article, but O'Brien carefully evaded essentials. He contented himself with skirmishing around on the outside trying to pick flaws out of insignificant things. There is good and obvious reason for his so doing. The subject matter was away over his head and, while he had the inclination to attack, he lacked the knowledge. The lines in the text were something new to him. They were not exactly the same as the ones he had assiduously perused ever since the Boer War, and which he hoped to keep on perusing and explaining 'till the end. It jarred him out of his intellectual coma, where equilibrium was attained at the expense of research, and leaves us the picture of an honest, sincere plodder in the movement wading into a philosophic discussion beyond his depths.

- J.A. McDonald.

WALKER'S REPLY to O'BRIEN on "RUSSIAN PURGE"

In the November issue of "The Proletarian News", there is a review of two articles, "The Deluge of Dialectics", and "The Russian Purge" - the latter by myself - that were published in the September issue of "The Western Socialist". The reviewer, C.M.O'Brien, is much perturbed over the "defective Marxism" of Socialists, which, he avers, has become "anti-Marxism".

Among the various offenses contained in my article against the purity of "Marxism", the one appearing in the following sentence particularly arouses Comrade O'Brien's ire: "If these men are guilty...the October revolution of 1917 was led by the greatest bunch of rogues, thieves, liars, cowards, cutthroats, assassins, racketeers, and buccaneers the world has ever witnessed." On the basis of this sentence, Comrade O'Brien reproaches me with "the use of vile names against the leaders of 'the October revolution'". Surely anyone reading this article would know that the "vile names" apply only IF the men are guilty, and that the whole article is an expression of grave doubt of their guilt. The possibility that the men are not guilty is entirely overlooked. It is not the present writer but those people who hold the executed men guilty that heap the "vile names" upon them.

With reference to the same sentence, Comrade O'Brien indignantly asks: "Why the 'If'?" The fact that of all those given a trial, not a solitary one saw fit to plead not guilty, but on the contrary, were anxious and enthusiastic in their confessions of guilt; and that hundreds were shot without being given a trial; and that many of them had confessed to the same crimes and had been pardoned before, does not mean a thing to this Communist "dialectician". Like the capitalist press reporters, who, he says, applauded the decisions of the court, he fails to see the anteroom preliminaries of the trials, but sees only the dramatically staged show.

Comrade O'Brien complains that the contrast drawn in my article between the treatment of juvenile delinquents in Rus-

sia and that in Robert Owen's colony at New Lanark is slender evidence that Socialism is not being built up in Russia. And so as evidence that is overwhelmingly convincing that Socialism is being built up in the "workers' fatherland", he reminds us that Owen regretted that in spite of the contentment and happiness of his employees, they were slaves at his mercy. I feel indebted to Comrade O'Brien for this reminder, making as it does, the contrast more glaring: Owen admitted that his slaves were at his mercy; Stalin endeavors to convince us that his slaves are free.

That the repeal of a law providing juvenile criminals with a medico-educational treatment and the substituting of a clause providing "that all minors from the age of 12 up who are detected of theft, violence, causing bodily injuries, wounding, murder, or attempting murder, are to be brought before the criminal courts with the application of all measures of criminal punishment" is compatible with "building up socialism" can only be conceived by one who has indulged in that deluge of books turned out by the Third International in the name of "Dialectical Materialism".

Another convincing display of Communist dialectics is afforded by our reviewer when he attempts to invoke the authority of Engels to prove that state capitalism is a "transition toward socialism". What Engels does tell us is that state capitalism is a barrier that must be surmounted, that it is the regular sequence of social development. In the same way, feudalism and chattel slavery were transition periods. State capitalism is a transition stage to socialism only in the sense that we are always in a transition period. And used in this sense, it has little or no meaning.

The phrase, "transition period", however, used in connection with Russia has a specific meaning; viz., a transition from capitalism to socialism. That Engels did not even infer that state capitalism is any such transition period may be seen by the following passage from "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific" (Kerr edition, page 123): "The modern state, no matter

what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of the productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage workers -- proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head. But, brought to a head, it topples over. State ownership of the productive forces is not the solution of the conflict, but concealed within it are the technical conditions that form the elements of that solution".

Comrade O'Brien's dialectics as applied in his review are reminiscent of other days. Indeed it seems that the high plane to which he has now developed that science is but the logical outcome of the auspicious beginning he made away back before the war. At that time, Comrade O'Brien used to tell us that because the struggle between employers and employees was one between buyers and sellers of a commodity, it was no more a part of the class struggle than the struggle between the buyers and sellers of pipes, shoes, bread, or any other commodity.

Among Comrade O'Brien's numerous spicy dishes of dialectics was one that purported to explain how a man could be both a Christian and a socialist. Socialism, said Comrade O'Brien, was a science like Astronomy or mathematics. If a man made a study of astronomy or mathematics, he was an astronomer or a mathematician, even though he might be a Christian. And if a man made a study of socialism, by the same logic, he was a socialist, even though he might be a Christian.

That the seeds of dialectical learning that were sown in Comrade O'Brien's youth have been judiciously cared for through the years until now they have become mature plants blossoming forth fragrant and colorful bloom is seen not only by the astute criticism contained in his review, but also in another article appearing in the same issue of "The Proletarian News" and entitled "Two Decades of the Soviet". In this article he speaks of the absence of capitalists in Russia and at the same time of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Would Comrade O'Brien

explain how there can be a proletariat without a bourgeoisie? Further in this article Comrade O'Brien says that the "defeat of the proletarian revolutions in other European countries" than Russia, in the 1917 period, was primarily due to the faulty leadership of "Socialist and Union leaders", who, he says, "betrayed" the working class. Comrade O'Brien here betrays his own "anti-Marxism". He believes, and says, that "highly qualified" leaders can, in a weak moment of the bourgeois state, seize control for the workers and carry through the revolution. Comrade O'Brien, instead of being a Marxist, is, in reality, a modern Blanquist in disguise.

I mention Comrade O'Brien's "dialectics" of his younger days because it suggests why he is so receptive to the "dialectics" now emanating from Moscow. His present "dialectics" is the lineal descendant of that of his younger years.

***** R.C.Walker.

"Comical Antics"

Our local Communist member of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, James Litterick, is a kindly person. As all of you know, the problem of those who own and control Manitoba is a serious one from a financial point of view. The City of Winnipeg is specially up against it to know how to carry on.

In our Socialist ignorance we thought that that, at least, was a master's problem, but the kindly Communist has proven our error. He, like a modern Lochinvar comes to the aid of the distracted exploiters of labor by offering the following 5 plank platform:- (Gosh how them Communists love the number 5)

"A business tax ranging from five to 40%, increasing revenue from the business tax by \$700,000.

"Abolishing tax exemptions including exemption on railway properties, bringing in from \$450,000 to \$500,000 added revenue yearly.

"Changing set-up of property tax, by easing the tax on small properties owned by persons with low incomes, increasing the tax on big properties and big incomes, to the tune of \$380,000 additional income a year.

"Giving the city an income tax to bring in approximately \$700,000 a year.

"Giving the city a share in the liquor and gasoline taxes".

Then to cap it all, in the same report "Jimmy" tells a wondering world the reason for the new Royal Commission set up to deal with the financial problems of the Dominion and Provinces: allow us to quote again:-

"The commission, he said, had been set up by the "big fellows" to see to it that the present capitalistic set-up be continued for another 10 years, and so will take care that their findings will include a plan to prevent its total collapse."

How Communists love to prophesy the collapse of capitalism. Litterick's suggestions of how to patch it up combined with his implied prophesy of another 10 years for it, reminds me of another and more famous Communist, Harry Pollitt of England, who ten years ago was prophesying the early deace of the system and who now in his report to the 14th Party Congress in a still live and kicking capitalist system has this to say about the futility of Communist activities:-

"We take part, for example, in mass movements for higher wages; we are tireless in our activity and we make our practical proposals to secure the workers' demands, but as a rule we fail to show that the wage struggle is born out of the struggle between the classes, and that so long as capitalism exists the workers will always have to face wage issues, unemployment, reaction and the danger of war." - P.

WINTER ACTIVITIES of LOCAL VANCOUVER No. 1

The usual fall classes conducted by the above Local will commence at the beginning of November as follows:

Marxian Economics: Every Tuesday at 8pm.

History (from the viewpoint of the Materialist Conception) every Sunday at 3 pm.

Propaganda meeting every Sunday at 3 p.m. Questions and discussion invited.

Open Forum : Every Thursday at 3 p.m.

All these classes and meetings held in the S.P. of C. headquarters at 666 Homer St, Vancouver, B.C.

The "W.S." Maintenance Fund

Look at our income for December below - the response to our appeal was good - almost reached a dollar a day - many old-timers dropped a line and some cash - some could not afford the last, but wished us success - Frank McNey promised a short article soon - Dan Pollitt is in poor health in Calgary and says he can't wait much longer for the social revolution or for Aberhart's \$25 - only a miracle can bring the latter but the workers can have the former when they want it - Simpson takes a bundle of papers every month and busies himself collecting subs in Moose Jaw - we could use a few more like Jack in other centers - Walker sells 75 Western Socialists a month in the Nanaimo district and 25 Standards, which is something for the boys in the big cities to shoot at - 5 comrades in Calgary who prefer to remain anonymous to us send in a half a buck apiece with the information money is as scarce as hen's teeth there - which appears to be a general condition among our supporters everywhere - there is no superfluity of cash in this office, anyway - a comrade warns against over-indulgence at New Years - the proletarian stomach can't stand it, he says, but the proletarian difficulty is to get that much, we think - an eastern reader sends a dollar and says he hopes to do the same more often in the future - thanks for those kind words - we will need every penny we can beg, borrow or steal - we planked down \$30 on Dec. 20 as down payment on a \$100 mimeograph - that left us flat - stony broke - the balance must be met in 12 monthly payments - so, our financial message for the new year is - send cash regularly to Box 1804, Winnipeg, Man.

Receipts to Jan. 1. - H.W. - J. McA. - B.N. - J.E. - F.K. (Calgary) 50¢ each; A. P. (Wpg) \$5.00; F.L. (Wpg) \$1.00; J.M. (Wpg) 50¢; D.S. (St. John, N.B.) \$1.00; A.S. (Wpg) 50¢; F. J. McN. (Craignyle, Alta.) \$1.00; F.R. - B.K. - J.W.B. - F.R. (Moose Jaw) per J.S. 50¢ each; J.S. (Moose Jaw) \$1.00; C.T. (Wpg) \$1.00; A.P. (Frisco) \$1.00; J.A. McD. (Frisco) \$2.00; Grower (Wpg) 50¢; Dan.P. (Calgary) \$1.00; A.K. (Wpg) 25¢; Dot.H. (Calgary) \$1.10; R.C.W. (Nanaimo, B.C.) \$2.25; J.M. (Wpg) 25¢; H.J.M. (Colonsay, Sask) \$1.00; S.W. (Toronto) \$1.00: Grand total: \$25.85.

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In common with all other democratic and liberty loving people confronted with another happy new year, the population of B.C., whether as individuals, groups, or political parties, are at present engaged in the time honored pastime of reviewing their shortcomings in the previous year with a view to avoiding similar pitfalls in the uncertain future, and on every hand a phrase, generally reserved for the humdrum world of business or the prayer meeting - "Resolutions are now in order" resounds throughout the land.

This seasonal self-criticism being a very human failing it would be natural to assume that even labor party politicians would not be immune from its chastening influence, although most Socialists would regard any hopes for their ultimate reformation as a humorous or Utopian speculation, for, unlike the average citizen who generally tackles the job of his own regeneration with a humble and contrite heart or at least when influenced deeply by remorse on a morning after the night before, the politician can only rationalize even when he thinks he is most sincere. Like some generals who see in every defeat or retreat a strategical victory, so the labor politician seeks external causes for failure and neglects or refuses to recognize the conflict of interests among his own members and supporters as the real reason for their fluctuating support at the polls.

This applies especially to the politicians of the C.C.F., whose record of electoral defeats lately has dismayed even their most insistent and loyal supporters - the Communists. Starting with the June Provincial election, in which the C.C.F. conceded second place to the previously non-existent Conservatives, they continued on the downward path by falling to 3rd place at the Federal bye-election in Victoria in November, losing to the Liberals by nearly 3,000 votes after having come within 90 votes of winning the seat in 1936 with the Liberals then as the tail-enders. The climax came in the December Civic Election when only one member was re-elected out of four seats won by them in the previous council.

This mournful record has, of course, furnished the C.P. with another "unanswerable argument", and in the "People's Advocate" (Dec. 10) they advance the following original solution: "The confidence of the C.C.F. leadership may still be unshaken despite defeats but the confidence of the progressive voting public can only be rallied for Victory under a United Front."

Personally we prefer as an "unanswerable argument" an illuminating comment by the ultra-Conservative "Daily Province" of March 10,: "It must be admitted however that the C.C.F. members of the City Council have so far conducted themselves with restraint and good judgment, acting as representatives of the citizens and not as representatives of a political party. There is reason to believe they will continue to follow this course." Our guess is that many C.C.F. supporters, expecting miracles or at least work and wages from their elected Aldermen and getting nothing, became alarmed the latter would "continue to follow this course" and, having no other alternative, turned again to the old "gang of reactionaries". The "progressive voting public", forsooth.

The C.C.F. executive, while not exactly sitting in sackcloth and ashes, admit much improvement in organization is possible and necessary, but the real cause of their recent failures advanced at all their meetings and in their periodicals is lack of funds, for money and votes are inseparable. Not since the halcyon days when the "Plenty for All" industry was in full bloom and the vast progressive voting public were in full possession of a voracious appetite have the C.C.F. known surcease from financial worries. However, C.C.F. supporters will no doubt find great consolation in the news from Victoria that their seven members in the B.C. House have made a good start along this line by solving their own financial problems, when a measure calling for an increase in their salaries from \$1,600 to \$2,000 per annum was recently passed without the necessity of a roll call vote, although it must have been

 ** / BOOKS ABOUT PARADISE / **

The "Nation" of Nov. 13, 1937, contains reviews by Edmund Wilson of seven books about Russia, those books being:

"Moscow, 1937." By Lion Feuchtwanger.

"Retouches à Mon Retour de l'U.R.S.S."

- By Andre Gide.

"En U.R.S.S., 1936." By Pierre Herbart.

"Proletarian Journey." By Fred E. Beal.

"Assignment in Utopia." Eugene Lyons.

"Russia Twenty Years After." Victor Serge.

"A Medical Review of Soviet Russia."

By W. Horsley Gantt.

Dealing with the first book and the Radek-Pyatakoff trial, Wilson quotes Feuchtwanger: "Karl Radek, he says, 'often... smote the barrier with his newspaper or took up his glass of tea, threw a piece of lemon in, stirred it up, and whilst he uttered the most atrocious things, drank it in little sips... But most startling of all, and difficult of explanation, was the gesture with which Radek left the court after the conclusion of the proceedings.... He turned round, raised a hand in greeting, shrugged his shoulders very slightly, nodded to the others, his friends who were condemned to death, and smiled. Yes, he smiled.'"

Radek was not condemned to die, but there is little doubt that he, along with his associates, expected the death sentence. The above quotation, however, along with other reports of the Moscow trials, lends support to the belief that they did not expect this sentence to be carried out; that in return for their self-vilification they were to obtain freedom in obscurity, under assumed names. We are of the opinion, however, that this bargain - if it really existed - has not been lived up to by the Stalin government. It is not likely that the present day Bolsheviks, whose unscrupulousness is shown even in their own reports of the terrorist campaigns they have conducted against the old Bolsheviks, have allowed promises to prevent them from exterminating those whom they regard as opponents.

The second book reviewed by Wilson is that of Andre Gide. Despite the reviewer's opinion that this book is not entirely free from Gide's habitual perversity and malice, it is worthy of some consideration

because it is a record of shattered beliefs, resulting from the author's visit to a land which he had formerly believed to be little short of paradise for the workers. One quotation should be of interest, particularly to those followers of Stalin who so stoutly defend democracy in other countries:

"I doubt if any country in the world, even in Hitler's Germany, is the mind less free, less repressed, less, fearful, more vassalized."

Herbart, like Gide, was a well known Communist writer. On Gide's return from Russia he tried to dissuade him from publishing his book, insisting that the bad had to be taken along with the good. He now says: "Too many witnesses agree for me to allow myself to be longer in doubt or to be silent any longer. It has now become impossible to defend the U.S.S.R. without lying and knowing one lies. Such a course cannot serve the revolution."

I have read the next three books listed above. Lyons' book contains a rather gruesome description of the tortures practiced by the G.P.U. Beal takes a rap at those authors who "visited" Moscow, drank Vodka, worshipped Stalin and hoped each "to write a best seller or a popular play about the revolution and settle down on a farm in Pennsylvania."

Serge is a Trotskyite, which means that he is an outmoded Communist, belonging to the old blood and thunder days. He abhors the purges now going on in Russia, but he is an honest lover of violence and he hopes for the day when there will be a little more of it, with himself amongst those in power dealing it out.

Dr. Gantt's book praises what has been done in improving Russian hospitalization and medical facilities.

On a different plane from those already mentioned is another booklet, not reviewed by Wilson. It is written by M. Yvon, a French worker, and entitled "What has become of the Russian Revolution?". This pamphlet will be reviewed next month.

- P.

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* * * * *
 * THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA *
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O B J E C T

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA holds:-

THAT society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living, (i.e., lands, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labor alone wealth is produced.

THAT in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

THAT this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

THAT as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

THAT this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

THAT as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly of the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into an agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.

THAT as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

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THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labor or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon all members of the working class of this country to support these principles to the end that a speedy termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labor, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

* * *

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at the Head Office.